



United States Congress

NEWS RELEASE

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IDAHO DELEGATION APPLAUDS TRICARE INCREASE **-Ruling Ensures Treatment at Critical Access Hospitals -**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Idaho Congressional Delegation praised the Department of Defense today for its decision to increase TRICARE reimbursement rates for Critical Access Hospitals. This rule change brings TRICARE rates more in line with Medicare, ensuring continued access to high quality health care for military personnel and their dependents.

“Our military men and women risk everything for our country,” Senator Larry Craig said. “I am pleased that the Department of Defense is making the necessary policy changes to address the health care needs of our military men and women who reside in rural areas. Our hospitals have stepped up to the plate to help care for them and this rule change is an important adjustment that was needed to ensure continued access to quality health care.”

Senators Craig and Mike Crapo and Congressman Mike Simpson earlier this year urged the Defense Department to include Elmore Medical Center in Mountain Home in a demonstration project that would increase TRICARE reimbursement. The delegation recommended Elmore Medical Center because nearly 20 percent of its patients are TRICARE beneficiaries. The new ruling replaces that project and expands to include all Critical Access Hospitals.

“It is terrific that Elmore Medical Center will benefit from the Department of Defense decision to increase TRICARE reimbursement for critical access hospitals,” Crapo said. “Critical access hospitals face unique challenges; accordingly, it is important from a policy standpoint that the reimbursement rates are appropriate for the care given. Thanks to the new rule, TRICARE patients will now receive the same enhanced reimbursement as Medicare and Medicaid patients.”

“Many military families receive care from the Elmore Medical Center, and I’m grateful they will benefit by increasing TRICARE reimbursements,” Simpson added. “This will ensure that our troops and their families continue to have access to the care they need and deserve.”

The rule change goes into effect immediately.